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L E T T E R



F R O M

YCRICK TO ELIZA.



L O N D O N, P R I N T E D :

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD APSLEY,
Lord High Chancellor of England.

MY LORD,

THE Editor of the following letters, is so far from having tasted your Lordship's bounty, that he is, and perhaps ever must remain, a stranger to your person, consequently, no adulation is to be apprehended from him—He leaves it to the weak and oppressed, the widow and orphan, to proclaim your Lordship's virtues in your public capacity ; that which he would celebrate is of a private nature, namely, your filial affection, which is so conspicuous,

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spicuous, that he flatters himself a volume of letters, written by such a person as Mr. Sterne, on which your noble father is placed in a light so truly amiable, cannot fail of engaging your Lordship's gracious acceptance and protection—In this hope, and upon this foundation, he presumes to dedicate these papers to your Lordship, and to have the honour of subscribing himself,

M Y L O R D,

Your Lordship's

Most obedient

And most humble Servant,

T H E E D I T O R.

P R E F A C E.

P R E F A C E.

TH E foul and infamous traffick,
between dishonest booksellers and
profligate scribblers, which has subsist-
ed for more than a century, has justly
brought posthumous publications un-
der suspicion, in England, France, and
more especially in Holland: Ministers of
state in every European Court, great
generals, royal mistresses, authors of
established reputation, in a word all
such as have had the misfortune to ad-
vance themselves to eminence, have
been obliged to leave behind them par-
cels of letters, and other memoirs, of
the most secret and important transacti-
ons of their times, in which every fact,
beyond the information of a news-
paper

paper or coffee-house chat is so faithfully misrepresented, every character delineated with such punctual deviation from the truth, and causes and effects which have no possible relation, are with such amazing effrontery obtruded upon the public, that it is no wonder if men of sense, who read for instruction as well as entertainment, generally condemn them in the lump, never, or very rarely, affording them the honour of a perusal.—The publisher of these letters, however, has not the smallest apprehension that any part of this well-grounded censure can fall to his share; he deals not in surprising events to astonish the reader, nor in characters (one excepted) which have figured on the great theatre of the world; he purposely waves all proofs which might be drawn concerning their authenticity,

from

from the character of the gentleman who had the perusal of the originals, and, with Eliza's permission, faithfully copied them at Bombay in the East-Indies ; from the testimony of many respectable families in this city, who knew and loved Eliza, carested and admired Mr. Sterne, and were well acquainted with the tender friendship between them, from many curious anecdotes in the letters themselves, any one of which were fully sufficient to authenticate them, and submits his reputation to the taste and discernment of the commonest reader, who must, in one view, perceive that these letters are genuine, beyond any possibility of doubt. As the public is unquestionably entitled to every kind of information concerning the characters contained in these letters, which consists with the duties of humanity

nity and a good citizen, that is, a minute acquaintance with those of whom honourable mention is made, or the publisher is furnished with authorities to vindicate from Mr. Sterne's censures, which, as a man of warm temper and lively imagination, he was perhaps sometimes hurried into without due reflection, he persuades himself that no party concerned will or can be offended with this publication, especially if it is considered, that without such information it would be cold and uninteresting; that by publishing their merits he cannot be understood to intend them any injury, and without it would himself fail in his duty to the public—Eliza, the lady to whom these letters are addressed, is Mrs. Elizabeth Draper, wife of Daniel Draper, Esq; counsellor at Bombay, and

at

at present chief of the English factory at Surat, a gentleman very highly respected in that quarter of the globe — She is by birth an East-Indian ; but the circumstance of being born in the country not proving sufficient to defend her delicate frame against the heats of that burning climate, she came to England for the recovery of her health, when by accident she became acquainted with Mr. Sterne. He immediately discovered in her a mind so congenial with his own, so enlightened, so refined and so tender, that their mutual attraction presently joined them in the closest union that purity could possibly admit of ; he loved her as his friend, and prided in her as his pupil ; all her concerns became presently his ; her health, her circumstances, her reputation, her children were his ; his fortune, his time, his country

country were at her disposal, so far as the sacrifice of all or any of these might in his opinion contribute to her real happiness. If it is asked whether the glowing heat of Mr. Sterne's affection never transported him to a flight beyond the limits of pure platonism, the publisher will not take upon him absolutely to deny it; but this he thinks so far from leaving any stain upon that gentleman's memory, that it perhaps includes his fairest encomium, since to cherish the seeds of piety and chastity in a heart which the passions are interested to corrupt, must be allowed to be the noblest effort of a soul, fraught and fortified with the justest sentiments of Religion and Virtue—Mr. and Mrs. James, so frequently and honourably mentioned in these letters, are the worthy heads of an opulent family in this city;

city ; their character is too well established to need the aid of the publisher in securing the estimation they so well deserve and universally possess, yet he cannot restrain one observation ; that to have been respected and beloved by Mr. Sterne and Mrs. Draper is no inconsiderable testimony of their merit, and such as it cannot be displeasing to them to see published to the world—Miss Light, now Mrs. Stratton, is on all accounts a very amiable young lady—She was accidentally a passenger in the same ship with Eliza, and instantly engaged her friendship and esteem, but being mentioned in one of Mrs. Draper's letters to Mr. Sterne, in somewhat of a comparative manner with herself, his partiality for her, as she modestly expressed it, took the alarm, and betrayed him into some expressions,

preffions, the coarseness of which cannot be excused. Mrs. Draper declares, that this lady was entirely unknown to him, and infinitely superior to his idea of her: she has been lately married to George Stratton, Esq. Counsellor at Madras — The manner in which Mr. Sterne's acquaintance with the celebrated Lord Bathurst, the friend and companion of Addison, Swift, Pope, Steele, and all the finest wits of the last age, commenced, cannot fail to attract the attention of the curious reader: here that great man is social and unreserved, unshackled with that sedulity in supporting a feigned character which exposes most of his rank to the contempt of wise men, and the ridicule of their valets de chambre; here he appears the same as in his hours of festivity and happiness with Swift
 and

and Addison, superior to forms and ceremonies, and, in his eighty-fifth year abounding in wit, vivacity and humanity: methinks the pleasure of such a gentleman's acquaintance resembles that of conversing with superior beings; but it is not fit to dwell longer on this pleasing topic, least it should anticipate the reader's pleasure in perusing the letter itself: one remark however it suggests, which may be useful to old men in general, to wit, that it appears, by his Lordship's example, the sour contracted spirit observable in old age, is not specifically an effect of years, altho' they are commonly pleaded in it's excuse. Old men would therefore do well to correct this odious quality in themselves; or, if that must not be, to invent a better apology for it — It is very much to be lamented, that Eliza's

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modesty

modesty was invincible to all the publisher's endeavours to obtain her answers to these letters : her wit, penetration and judgment, her happiness in the epistolary stile, so rapturously commended by Mr. Sterne, could not fail to furnish a rich entertainment for the public. The publisher could not help telling her, that he wished to God she really was possessed of that vanity with which she was charged ; to which she replied that she was so far from acquitting herself of vanity, that she suspected that to be the cause why she could not prevail on herself to submit her letters to the public eye ; for altho' Mr. Sterne was partial to every thing of her's, she could not hope that the world would be so too : with this answer he was obliged to be contented ; yet cannot reflect without deep concern, that this elegant

elegant accomplishment, so peculiarly adapted to the refined and delicate understandings of ladies, should be yet so rare that we can boast of only one Lady Wortley Montague among us, and that Eliza in particular could not be prevailed on to follow the example of that admired lady—The reader will remark, that these letters have various signatures, sometimes he signs Sterne, sometimes Yorick, and to one or two he signs her Bramin; altho' it is pretty generally known who the Bramins are, yet least any body should be at a loss, it may not be amiss to observe, that the principle cast or tribe among the idolatrous Indians are the Bramins, and out of the chief class of this cast come the priests, so famous for their austerities, and the shocking torments, and frequently death, they voluntarily expose them-

selves to, on a religious account : now, as Mr. Sterne was a clergyman, and Eliza an Indian by birth, it was customary with her to call him her Bramin, which he accordingly, in his pleasant moods, uses as a signature—It remains only, to take some little notice of the family marked with asterisks, on whom Mr. Sterne has thought proper to shed the bitterest gall of his pen ; it is however evident, even from some passages in the letters themselves, that Mrs. Draper could not be easily prevailed on to see this family in the same odious light in which they appeared to her, perhaps overzealous, friend. He, in the heat, or I may say, hurry of his affection, might have accepted suspicious circumstances as real evidences of guilt, or listened too unguardedly to the insinuations of their enemies : be
 that

that as it may, as the publisher is not furnished with sufficient authorities to exculpate them, he chuses to drop the ungrateful subject, heartily wishing, that this family may not only be innocent of the shocking treachery with which they are charged, but may be able to make their innocence appear clearly to the world, otherwise that no person may be industrious enough to discover and make known their name.

ELIZ A will receive my books with this, the summons came all hot from the heart; I wish that could give them any title to be offered to yours: the others came from the head; I am more indifferent about their reception.—

I know not how it comes, but I am half in love with you—I ought to be wholly so; for I never valued (or saw more good qualities to value) or thought more of one of your sex, than of you—So adieu.

Yours faithfully,

If not affectionately,

L—S—N E.

I Cannot rest Eliza, tho' I shall call on you at half past twelve, till I know how you do—may thy dear face smile as thou risest, like the sun of this morning! I was much grieved to hear of your alarming indisposition yesterday; and disappointed too at not being let in—Remember, my dear, “that a friend has the same right as a physician” the etiquettes of this town (you'll say) say otherwise; no matter, delicacy and propriety do not always consist in observing their frigid doctrines—I am going out to breakfast, but shall be at my lodgings by eleven, when I hope to read a single line under thy own hand, that thou art better, and will be glad to see,

Thy

Nine o'Clock.

B R A M I N.

I Got thy letter last night, Eliza, on my return from Lord Bathurst's, where I din'd ; and where I was heard (as I talk'd of thee for an hour without intermission) with so much pleasure and attention, that the good old Lord toasted your health three several times ; and tho' he is now in his eighty-fifth year, says he hopes to live long enough to be introduced as a friend, to my fair Indian disciple ; and to see her eclipse all other Nabobesses as much in wealth, as she already does in exterior and (what is far better) in interior merit—I hope so too.

This nobleman is an old friend of mine. You know he was always the protector of men of wit and genius, and had those of the last century, Addison, Steele,

Steele, Pope, Swift, Prior, &c. &c.
always at his table.

The manner in which his notice of me began, was singular, as it was polite : he came up to me one day, as I was at the Princess of Wales's court—
“ I want to know you, Mr. S—ne ; but it is fit you should also know who it is that wishes this pleasure. You have heard, continued he, of an old Lord Bathurst, of whom your Pope's and Swift's have sung and spoken so much : I have liv'd my life with genius's of that cast, but have surviv'd them ; and despairing ever to find their equals, 'tis some years since I clos'd my accounts, and shut up my books, with thoughts of never opening them again : But you have kindled a desire in me to open them once more before I die, which I
now

now do—so go home and dine with me.”

This nobleman, I say, is a prodigy ! for at eighty-five he has all the wit and promptness of a man of thirty—a disposition to be pleased, and a power to please others, beyond whatever I knew ; added to which, a man of learning, courtesy and feeling.—

He heard me talk of thee, Eliza, with uncommon satisfaction, for there was only a third person, and of sensibility, with us—and a most sentimental afternoon, till nine o’clock, have we pass’d ! But thou, Eliza, was the star that conducted and enlightened the discourse ! and when I talked not of thee, still didst thou fill my mind, and warm every thought I utter’d ! for I am

not

not ashamed to acknowledge, I greatly miss thee—best of all good girls! the sufferings I have sustained all night on account of thine, Eliza, are beyond my power of words—assuredly does heaven give strength proportioned to the weight he lays upon us—Thou hast been bow'd down, my child, with every burthen that sorrow of heart and pain of body cou'd inflict on a poor being—and still thou tell'st me that thou art beginning to get ease, thy fever gone—thy sickness, the pain in thy side vanishing also—

May every evil so vanish, that thwarts Eliza's happiness, or but awakens her fears for a moment—Fear nothing, my dear, hope every thing; and the balm of this passion will shed its influence on thy health, and make thee enjoy a
spring

spring of youth and chearfulness, more than thou hast hardly yet tasted.

And so thou hast fixed thy Bramin's portrait over thy writing desk, and will consult it in all doubts and difficulties ; grateful good girl ! Yorick smiles contentedly over all thou dost, his picture does not do justice to his own complacency—

Thy sweet little plan, and distribution of thy time, how worthy of thee !

Indeed, Eliza, thou leavest one nothing to direct thee in, thou leavest me nothing to require, nothing to ask, but a continuance of that conduct which won my esteem, and has made me thy friend for ever.

May

May the roses come quick back to thy cheek, and the rubies to thy lips ! but trust my declaration, Eliza, that thy husband (if he is the good feeling man I wish him) will press thee to him with more honest warmth and affection, and kiss thy pale poor dejected face with more transport, than he would be able to do in the best bloom of all thy beauty—and so he ought.—I pity him.—He must have strange feelings, if he knows not the value of such a creature as thou art.

I am glad Miss Light goes with you, she may relieve you from many anxious moments.

I am glad too, that your shipmates are friendly beings—you cou'd least dispense with what is contrary to thy

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own

own nature, which is soft and gentle, Eliza, it wou'd civilize savages ; tho' pity were it, thou should'st be tainted with the office.

How canst thou make apologies for thy last letter ! 'tis most delicious to me, for the very reasons you excuse it.

Write to me, my child, only such, let them speak the easy chearfulness of a heart that opens itself any how, and every how, to a man you ought to esteem and trust.

Such Eliza, I write to thee, and so I thou'd ever live with thee, most artlessly, most affectionately, if Providence permitted thy residence in the same section of the globe. For I am all that honour and inclination can make me.

Thy

B R A M I N.

I Write this Eliza, at Mr. James's, whilst he is dressing, and the dear girl his wife is writing beside me, to thee.

I got your melancholy billet before we sat down to dinner; 'tis melancholy indeed my dear, to hear so piteous an account of thy sickness, thou art encompass'd with evils enow, without that additional weight—I fear it will sink thy poor soul, and body with it, past recovering—Heaven supply thee with fortitude! We have talked of nothing but thee, Eliza, and of thy sweet virtues, and endearing conduct, the whole afternoon.—

Mrs. James and the Bramin have mix'd their tears a hundred times, in

speaking of thy hardships, thy goodness, thy graces, 'tis a subject that will never end betwixt us—Oh! she is good and friendly!

The * * * by heaven are worthless; I have heard enough to tremble at the articulation of the name—How could you, Eliza leave them (or suffer them to leave you rather) with impressions the least favourable? I have told thee enough to plant disgust against their treachery to thee, to the last hour of thy life — yet still thou told'st Mrs. James at last, that thou believest they affectionately loved thee—Her delicacy to my Eliza, and true regard to her ease of mind, have saved thee from hearing more glaring proofs of their baseness—For God's sake, write not to them, nor foul thy fair characters with
such

such polluted hearts—They love thee !
 —What proof ?—Is it their actions
 which say so ? or their zeal for those
 attachments which do thee honour, and
 make thee happy ? or their tenderness
 for thy fame ? No, but they weep, and
 say tender things—Adieu to all such for
 ever.—

Mrs. James's honest heart revolts
 against the idea of even returning them
 one visit. I honour her, and honour
 thee for almost every act of thy life,
 but this blind partiality to an unworthy
 being.

Forgive my zeal, dear girl, and
 allow me a right, which arises only out
 of that fund of affection I have and shall
 preserve for thee, to the hour of my
 death—

Reflect Eliza, what are my motives for perpetually advising thee, think whether I can have any which proceed not from the cause I have mentioned ?

I think you a very deserving woman, and that you want nothing but firmness, and a better opinion of yourself, to be the best female character I know. —

I wish I cou'd inspire you with a share of that vanity your enemies lay to your charge (tho' to me it has never been visible) because I think, in a well turn'd mind, it will produce good effects—

I probably shall never see you more ;
yet flatter myself you will sometimes
think

think of me with pleasure ; because you must be convinced I love you, and so interest myself in your rectitude, that I had rather hear of any evil befalling you, than your want of reverence for yourself—

I had not power to keep this remonstrance in my breast—tis now out—so adieu ! Heaven watch over my Eliza.

Thine

Y O R I C K.

TO whom shou'd Eliza apply in her distress, but to the friend that loves her ; why then, my dear, do you apologize for employing me ?

Yorick wou'd be offended, and with reason, if you ever sent commissions to another, which he cou'd execute—I have been with Zumps—and first your piano-forte must be tun'd from the brass middle string of your guitar, which is C.— I have got you a hammer too, and a pair of pliers to twist your wire with ; and may every one of them, my dear, vibrate sweet comfort to thy hopes ! I have bought you ten handsome brass screws to hang your necessaries upon : I purchas'd twelve, but stole a couple from you, to put up in my own cabin at Coxwauld—I shall never hang or take
my

my hat off one of them, but I shall think of you—I have bought thee, moreover, a couple of iron screws, which are more to be depended on than brass, for the globe—

I have wrote also to Mr. Abraham Walker, pilot at Deal, to acquaint him that I had dispatched these in a packet directed to his care, which I desir'd he wou'd seek after the moment the Deal machine arrives—I have moreover given directions to him, what sort of an arm chair you wou'd want, and have directed to purchase the best that Deal cou'd afford, and to take it with the parcel in the first boat that went off—Would, I cou'd Eliza, thus supply all thy wants, and all thy wishes! it would be a state of happiness to me—

The

The journal as it should be, all but its contents—

Poor dear, patient being! I do more than pity you, for I think I lose both firmness and philosophy, as I figure to myself your distresses—

Do not think I spoke last night with too much asperity of * * * ; there was a cause ; and besides, a good heart ought not to love a bad one, and indeed cannot. But adieu to the ungrateful subject—

I have been this morning to see Mrs. James ; she loves thee tenderly and unfeignedly ; she is alarmed for thee ; she says thou lookedst most ill and melancholy on going away ; she pities thee— I shall visit her every Sunday while I am in town—

As this may be my last letter, I earnestly bid thee farewell! may the God of kindness be kind to thee, and approve himself thy protector now thou art defenceless! and for thy daily comfort, bear in thy mind this truth, “ That whatever measure of sorrow and distress is thy portion, it will be repaid to thee in a full measure of happiness, by the Being thou hast wisely chosen for thy eternal friend—Farewell, farewell Eliza, while I live count upon me, as the most disinterested and warm of earthly friends.

Y O R I C K.

My Dearest ELIZA,

I Began a new journal this morning : you shall see it, for if I live not till your return to England, I will leave it you as a legacy : tis a sorrowful page, but I will write chearful ones, and could I write letters to thee, they should be chearful ones too, but few (I fear) will reach thee—however, depend upon receiving something of the kindly every post, till thou wavest thy hand, and bidst me write no more—Tell me how you are, and what sort of fortitude heaven inspires thee with. How are your accommodations my dear?—is all right?—scribble away any thing and every thing to me. Depend upon seeing me at Deal with the James's, should you be detained there by contrary winds. Indeed, Eliza, I should with
 pleasure

your person into your face with more than common care, the day you sat for Mrs. James, your colour too brighten'd, and your eyes shone with more than their usual brilliancy—

I then requested you to come simple and unadorn'd when you sat for me, knowing (as I see with unprejudic'd eyes that you cou'd receive no addition from the silkworm's aid, or jeweller's polish—

Let me now tell you a truth, which I believe I utter'd before—when I first saw you, I beheld you as an object of compassion, and a very plain woman—

The mode of your dress (the fashionable) disfigur'd you — but nothing

now cou'd render you such, but the being solicitous to make yourself admir'd as a handsome one—

You are not handsome, Eliza—nor is your's a face that will please the tenth part of your beholders—

But you are something more ; for I scruple not to tell you, I never saw so intelligent, so animated, so good a countenance ; nor ever was there, nor will there be, that man of sense, tenderness, and feeling in your company three hours, that was not, or will not be, your admirer and friend in consequence of it, *i. e.* if you assume or assumed no character foreign to your own, but appear'd the artless being nature design'd you for—a something in your voice and eyes, you possess in a degree
more

more perswasive than any woman I ever saw, read, or heard of :

But it is that bewitching sort of nameless excellence, that men of *nice sensibility* alone can be touch'd with—

Was your husband in England, I wou'd freely give him 500l. (if money cou'd purchase the acquisition) to let you only sit by me two hours in the day, while I wrote my sentimental journey—I am sure the work wou'd sell so much the better for it, that I should be reimburs'd the sum more than seven times told—

I would not give nine-pence for the picture of you, that the —— have got executed ; it is the resemblance of a concerted, made up co-

quette—your eyes, and the shape of your face (the latter the most perfect oval I ever saw) which are perfections that must strike the most indifferent judge, because they are equal to any of God's works in a similar way, and finer than any I beheld in all my travels, are manifestly inspir'd by the affected leer of the one, and strange appearance of the other, owing to the attitude of the head, which is a proof of the artist's, or your friend's false taste—

The * * * 's verify the character I once gave, of teasing and sticking like pitch or bird lime—

Sent a card that they would wait on Mrs. * * * on Friday.

She

She sent back she was engag'd ;

Then to meet at Ranelagh to-night ;
she answer'd she did not go—

She says if she allows the least footing, she never shall get rid of the acquaintance, which she is resolv'd to drop at once—

She knows them ; she knows they are not her friends or yours, and the first use they wou'd make of being with her, would be to sacrifice you to her (if they could) a second time—

Let her not, then, let her not, my dear, be a greater friend to thee than thou art to thyself ; she begs I will reiterate my request to you, that you
will

will not write to them—'twill give her, and thy Bramin too, inexpressible pain—be assur'd, all this is not without reason on her side. I have my reasons too, the first of which is, that I should grieve to excess, if Eliza wanted that fortitude her Yorick has built so high upon—

I said I wou'd never more mention—the name to thee, and had I not receiv'd it as a kind of charge from a dear woman that loves you, I should not have broke my word—

I will write again to-morrow to thee, thou best, and most endearing of girls : a peaceful night to thee ; my spirit will be with thee thro' every watch of it—
Adieu.

My dear ELIZA,

O H! I grieve for your cabin, and fresh painting will be enough to destroy every nerve about thee—nothing so pernicious as white lead—take care of yourself, dear girl, and sleep not in it too soon, 'twill be enough to give you a stroke of an epilepsy—

I hope you will have left the ship, and that my letters may meet and greet you, as you get out of your post chaise at Deal—when you have got them all, put them, my dear, into some order—the first eight or nine are number'd, but I wrote the rest without that direction to thee—but thou wilt find them out by the day or hour, which, I hope, I have generally prefixed to them; when they are got together in
chronological

(46)

chronological order, sew them together under a cover—I trust they will be a perpetual refuge to thee from time to time, and that thou wilt (when weary of fools and uninteresting discourse) retire and converse an hour with them and me—

I have not had power or the heart, to aim at enlivening one of them with a single stroke of wit or humour; but they contain something better, and what you will feel more suited to your situation—a long detail of much advice, truth, and knowledge—

I hope, too, you will perceive loose touches of an honest heart in every one of them, which speak more than the most studied periods, and will give thee more ground of trust and reliance upon

Yorick,